

Claims

I claim:

1. A method for presenting electronic mail messages to an operator, including the steps of

loading a plurality of headers from a mail server, each one of said headers associated with an electronic mail message;

receiving a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail messages from an operator;

presenting said first electronic mail message to said operator;

identifying a second one of said electronic mail messages; and

loading said second electronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting presentation of said first electronic mail message.

2. A method as in claim 1, including the steps of presenting at least one of said plurality of headers to said operator; and

interrupting said step of loading said plurality of headers, responsive to said dynamic selection of said first electronic mail message.

3. A method as in claim 1, including the step of presenting at least one of said plurality of headers to said opera-

1 tor in a first window; wherein said step of presenting said first
2 electronic mail message uses a second window.

3
4 4. A method as in claim 1, including the step of pre-
5 senting to said operator a status of said step of loading said
6 second electronic mail message.

7
8 5. A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of pre-
9 senting includes the steps of

10 displaying a partial preview of said second electronic
11 mail message; and

12 altering said partial preview in response to a change
13 in status of said step of loading said second electronic mail
14 message.

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16 6. A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of pre-
17 senting includes the step of displaying a preview of said second
18 electronic mail message in a distinct format.

19
20 7. A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of pre-
21 senting includes the step of displaying at least one graphic ele-
22 ment.

23
24 8. A method as in claim 4, wherein said step of pre-
25 senting includes the step of displaying text.

26
27 9. A method as in claim 1, including the steps of
28 receiving a dynamic selection of a third one of said
29 electronic mail messages from said operator;

1 interrupting said step of loading said second elec-
2 tronic mail message, responsive to said dynamic selection of said
3 third electronic mail message.

4
5 10. A method as in claim 1, including the steps of
6 storing said second electronic mail message in memory;
7 and

8 presenting said second electronic mail message in re-
9 sponse to selection thereof by said operator.

10
11 11. A method as in claim 1, wherein at least one of
12 said electronic mail messages comprises a plurality of pages of
13 hypertext for presentation to said operator.

14
15 12. A method as in claim 11, wherein said step of pre-
16 senting said first electronic mail message to said operator in-
17 cludes the steps of

18 selecting one of said plurality of pages of hypertext;
19 and
20 presenting said one page to said operator.

21
22 13. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
23 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a pref-
24 erence by said operator.

25
26 14. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
27 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
28 sender of said second electronic mail message.

1 15. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
2 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a set
3 of recipients of said second electronic mail message.

4
5 16. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
6 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a pri-
7 ority value for said second electronic mail message.

8
9 17. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
10 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a key-
11 word in one of said headers associated with said second elec-
12 tronic mail message.

13
14 18. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
15 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a key-
16 word in said second electronic mail message.

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18 19. A method as in claim 1, wherein said step of iden-
19 tifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a size
20 of said second electronic mail message.

21
22 20. Apparatus for presenting electronic mail messages
23 to an operator, said apparatus including

24 a mail client disposed for coupling ot a mail server
25 using a communication link;

26 means at said mail client for loading a plurality of
27 headers from a mail server, each one of said headers associated
28 with an electronic mail message;

1 an input port at said mail client disposed for receiv-
2 ing a dynamic selection of a first one of said electronic mail
3 messages from an operator;

4 an output port at said mail client disposed for pre-
5 senting said first electronic mail message to said operator;

6 means at said mail client for identifying a second one
7 of said electronic mail messages; and

8 means at said mail client for loading said second elec-
9 tronic mail message for later presentation, without interrupting
10 presentation of said first electronic mail message.

11
12 21. Apparatus as in claim 20, including an input ele-
13 ment coupled to said input port.

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15 22. Apparatus as in claim 20, including an output ele-
16 ment coupled to said output port.

17
18 23. Apparatus as in claim 20, including
19 means for coupling at least one of said plurality of
20 headers to said output port; and

21 means for interrupting said step of loading said plu-
22 rality of headers, responsive to said dynamic selection of said
23 first electronic mail message.

24
25 24. Apparatus as in claim 20, including
26 a first window coupled to said output port for present-
27 ing at least one of said plurality of headers to said operator;
28 and

1 a second window coupled to said output port for pre-
2 sented said first electronic mail message to said operator.

3
4 25. Apparatus as in claim 20, including a progress in-
5 dicator for loading said second electronic mail message.

6
7 26. Apparatus as in claim 25, wherein said progress
8 indicator includes a partial preview of said second electronic
9 mail message.

10
11 27. A method as in claim 4, wherein said progress in-
12 dicator includes a preview of said second electronic mail message
13 in a distinct format.

14
15 28. A method as in claim 4, wherein said progress in-
16 dicator includes at least one graphic element.

17
18 29. A method as in claim 4, wherein said progress in-
19 dicator includes text.

20
21 30. Apparatus as in claim 20, including
22 means for disposing said input port for receiving a dy-
23 namic selection of a third one of said electronic mail messages
24 from said operator;

25 means for interrupting loading said second electronic
26 mail message, responsive to said dynamic selection of said third
27 electronic mail message.

28
29 31. Apparatus as in claim 20, including

1 a memory;

2 means at said mail client for storing said second elec-
3 tronic mail message in said memory;

4 means at said mail client for reading said second elec-
5 tronic mail message from said memory in response to selection
6 thereof by said operator.

7
8 32. Apparatus as in claim 20, wherein at least one of
9 said electronic mail messages comprises a plurality of pages of
10 hypertext for presentation to said operator.

11
12 33. Apparatus as in claim 32, including
13 means for selecting one of said plurality of pages of
14 hypertext; and
15 means for coupling said one page to said output port.

16
17 34. Apparatus as in claim 20, wherein said means for
18 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
19 preference by said operator.

20
21 35. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
22 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
23 sender of said second electronic mail message.

24
25 36. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
26 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
27 set of recipients of said second electronic mail message.

1 37. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
2 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
3 priority value for said second electronic mail message.

4
5 38. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
6 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
7 keyword in one of said headers associated with said second elec-
8 tronic mail message.

9
10 39. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
11 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
12 keyword in said second electronic mail message.

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14 40. A method as in claim 1, wherein said means for
15 identifying a second electronic mail message is responsive to a
16 size of said second electronic mail message.